



## NAVAJO COUNTY ARIZONA

SEPTEMBER 2013



# Supervisors Chairman Nez Running a Different Race



Chairman Jonathan M. Nez gives a 'thumbs up' during the Silverton Alpine 50k Race in Colorado.

boring to me as a younger person, but I seem to have entered a different phase of my life and a different mentality.”

“Running has become fun for me and it has slowly changed my life. I feel better, I look better, I have made new friends who also enjoy the sport, and I am enjoying the challenge of setting new goals and achieving them.”

The goals have led to remarkable results. Chairman Nez just completed the Silverton Alpine 50k (roughly 31 miles) in a time of 6 hours, 16 minutes, 16 seconds. He placed 13th overall. He has also participated in a number of marathons, half-marathons and shorter distance races over the last few months. He says he thinks it would be cool to run a marathon in every state of the Union.

“People keep asking me how much weight I’ve lost,” says Chairman Nez. “I’m definitely lighter on my feet, but the pounds are not the most important thing. For me, it is knowing that I am on a path of health that I can sustain for a long time. There are little things that happen every day that tell me that my family and friends have been inspired by what I am doing, and that is the best result of all.”

Suggesting that someone is a ‘lightweight’ is probably not the highest compliment one can think up for a County Supervisor.

But, in this circumstance, Navajo County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jonathan M. Nez takes it as a compliment. Over the last year or so, a remarkable change has

taken place in the Supervisor from District 1, and it all stems from a newly discovered love of running. Lots of running.

“I used to think that running for fun was a joke,” said Chairman Nez. “I grew up loving to play basketball, so I got my miles in on the court. Just running around the track or down a road seemed really



# County Manager's Innovations Lead to Prestigious Honor

Navajo County Manager James Jayne works tirelessly, in partnership with the Navajo County Team, to innovate and improve services for area residents.

For his creativity and problem-solving skill during his decade of work in Navajo County, Jayne earned the prestigious Gabe Zimmerman Public Service award for innovation from the Center for the Future of Arizona.

The center named its annual awards after the director of community outreach for former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

Zimmerman was killed when a gunman attempted to kill Giffords during a public event in Tucson.



From left to right: Dr. Lattie Coor, chairman and CEO of the Center for the Future of Arizona with Navajo County Manager James Jayne following the award presentation.

The center cited Jayne's work incorporating new technology and finding creative ways to serve the public interest. Jayne is working to create a regional dispatch center for emergency response agencies; he implemented an online back-tax land auction process that brought a 48 percent sales rate compared to just 6 percent the year before. Jayne also oversaw the new solar project at the county's Holbrook Government Complex, which is resulting in an 80 percent energy reduction.

"I'm grateful that an esteemed group such as the Center for the Future of Arizona recognizes the inventive work being done in Navajo County," Jayne said. "I share this award with our dedicated employees who work tirelessly to serve residents and save taxpayer money."

Also receiving awards from the center this year were Betsey Bayless, who heads the Maricopa Integrated Health System, and Arian Colton, the planning director for the Pima County Development Services.

"These exemplary public servants represent the spirit of service to the public by which Gabe Zimmerman lived his life," Dr. Lattie Coor, chairman and CEO of the Center for the Future of Arizona, said. "They represent the best of the more than 100,000 professional public servants working at all levels of Arizona government."

## Have a Story Idea or a Tip?

Is there something you've always wanted to know about Navajo County but didn't know where to find the answer? Is there a story that you know about but we don't? Send us a request for a story or tell us about something that is newsworthy and we'll put it in the newsletter. Just drop a line via email to **Hunter Moore** at [hunter.moore@navajocountyaz.gov](mailto:hunter.moore@navajocountyaz.gov), please.

# Navajo County, Summit Medical Center Partner to Give Crime Victims a Break

Crime victims often find themselves facing unforeseen costs from their unfortunate event. Sustaining injuries in an attack or as the result of a drunk driver means substantial healthcare bills.

But Roxanne Padilla, Navajo County's acting Director of Victims Services has taken the initiative to partner in a unique way to save victims thousands of dollars.

Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center has agreed to charge crime victims the same rate for services that it charges the State of Arizona for patients on AHCCCS.

Hospitals who accept patients in the state system agree to charge a substantially smaller amount for procedures and visits than what they would charge someone without insurance. The savings is significant.

"People who suffered injuries during a crime shouldn't be forced to pay the high costs of health care," County Attorney Brad Carlyon said. "I'm proud that Summit Medical Center and my office can partner together to ensure crime victims don't face financial ruin from any injuries they sustain."

The Victim Services office has already negotiated an \$11,000 bill down to \$900, said Lynda Young, the County Attorney's Grants Administrator.

"We are here to help victims recover after horrible, and sometimes, life changing incidents," Young said. "Summit Medical Center has really stepped forward to serve the public and to help make the road to recovery easier."

# Recycling Old Tires Saves Environment, Health

Old tires present a toxic environmental problem when discarded improperly. Many people have seen stacks of tires in neighbors' yards or even along the side of the road.

Navajo County decided to gather old or discarded tires both to beautify the Cedar Hills community and to avoid an environmental problem.

Last month, the Navajo County Public Works team collected more than 400 old tires, eliminating eyesores and helping the environment.

"This is another great community partnership between Navajo County and the Cedar Hills community that makes a difference," Navajo County Supervisor Sylvia Allen said. "These old tires can be dangerous and unhealthy. Recycling them helps to clean up the area, while improving the environment and reducing the risks to our residents' health."

Through the community clean-up program, Navajo County was able to take three trailers full of old tires off the roads and front yards in the Cedar Hills community.



From left to right: County Attorney Brad Carlyon, Navajo County Prosecutor Joel Ruechel and Elizabeth Ortiz, the executive director of APAAC, following the award presentation.

## Prosecutor Ruechel Earns Lifetime Achievement Award From State Group

Career Navajo County prosecutor Joel Ruechel isn't just a feared trial advocate in the courtroom, he's also a popular singer at weddings and other occasions.

And after nearly 30 years in the Navajo County Attorney's Office, Joel received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys Advisory Council.

Joel started in the County Attorney's office in 1984. He quickly worked his way up the ladder, trying homicide cases after just three years of experience.

"Joel is an exceptional role model who makes those around him aspire to greater heights – leading others to become part of those dedicated few that devote their lives and careers to protecting our friends and neighbors to preserve the quality of life in our communities," Navajo County Attorney Brad Carlyon said.

Joel's courtroom success and his work ethic earn him respect all around the courthouse.

Junior prosecutors refer to him as "the Great Oracle," because of his institutional knowledge. Joel's success comes from his detailed preparation. Joel knows his cases inside and out, just as he knows the law. Respect for Joel reaches beyond the professionals who work at the courthouse. During an arraignment not long ago, a defendant overheard that Joel would be handling the case. He slumped in his chair, let out a sigh and put his face in his hands.

Joel doesn't just practice law inside the four walls of a courthouse. He often teaches classes for new law enforcement officers and provides training to local agencies. He is often at major crime scenes helping officers understand what prosecutors need.

Joel also stands out as a pillar of the community. He's a deacon at his church, a Sunday school teacher and a youth soccer coach. And he loves to sing, often called upon for special engagements in the Navajo County community.

"Joel has been a great resource for three decades in this office," Carlyon said. "He deserves his lifetime achievement award and I hope he continues protecting the residents of Navajo County for years to come."